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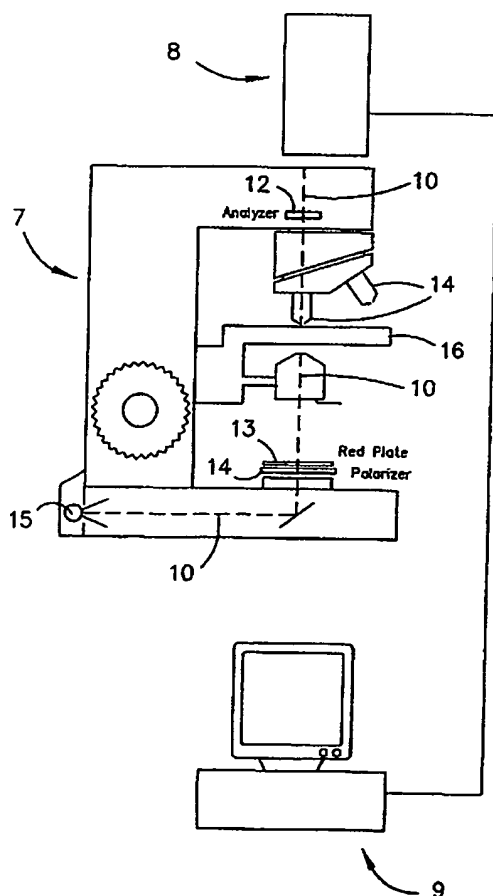
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(54) Title: **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR TESTING FIBRES**



(57) Abstract: A method for measuring the maturity or cell wall thickening of a sample of cellulosic fibre including the steps of: a) exposing the sample of fibre to polarized light; b) capturing one or more images of the sample through crossed polar lenses and a compensator plate so that the image(s) include interference colours from the sample; and c) conducting computer analysis on the image(s) captured in step b) to determine the maturity or degree of cell wall thickening of the cellulosic fibre by comparing the image(s) to reference colour interference data. The apparatus for carrying out the method includes an optical light path (10) for exposing the sample of fibre to polarized light, an image capturing means (8), and a computer (9) for conducting image analysis to determine fibre maturity or the degree of cell wall thickening.



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